

HOUSE BUDGET COMMITTEE

Democratic Caucus

The Honorable John M. Spratt Jr. ■ Ranking Democratic Member

B-71 Cannon HOB ■ Washington, DC 20515 ■ 202-226-7200 ■ www.house.gov/budget_democrats

June 16, 2004

Homeland Security and Interior Appropriations Bills Shortchange Critical Priorities

Dear Democratic Colleague:

The Homeland Security and Interior appropriations bills on the House floor today provide the first proof of the harmful consequences of the 2005 Republican budget resolution. Appropriators are forced to shortchange certain vital domestic programs because of the low funding levels that Republicans set in their budget resolution to make room for their long-term tax cut agenda.

As a result of their choice, Republicans are cutting 2005 domestic funding — all funding except for defense and international programs — by a total of \$11.1 billion below the amount needed to maintain services at their 2004 levels, even after counting a gimmick to raise funding by \$7.2 billion. ***Domestic services will be cut by \$487 million below a freeze at the 2004 enacted level.***

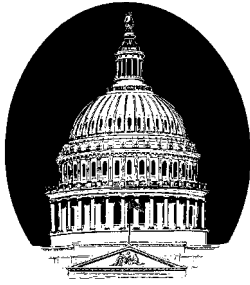
Because Congress will increase funding for some domestic programs, it will have to cut others by even more. With these first bills on the House floor, the Appropriations Committee has begun to spread that cut to many important services in the Homeland Security and Interior appropriations bills. The attached brief report lists some of the areas these bills fail to adequately support.

Sincerely,

/s

John M. Spratt, Jr.

Ranking Democratic Member



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This week the House is scheduled to vote on Homeland Security and Interior appropriations bills, which provide the first proof of the harmful consequences of the 2005 Republican budget resolution. Appropriators are forced to shortchange certain vital domestic programs because of the low funding levels that Republicans set in the budget resolution they approved. In that budget resolution conference agreement, Republicans instead chose to make room for \$55.2 billion of additional tax cuts.

As a result of their choice, Republicans are cutting 2005 domestic funding — all funding except for defense and international programs — by a total of \$11.1 billion below the amount needed to maintain services at their 2004 levels, even after counting a gimmick to raise funding by \$7.2 billion. ***Domestic services will be cut by \$487 million below a freeze at the 2004 enacted level.***

Because Congress will increase funding for some domestic programs, it will have to cut others by even more. With these first bills on the House floor, the Appropriations Committee has begun to spread that cut to many important services in the Homeland Security and Interior appropriations bills. The following is a list of some of the areas these bills fail to adequately support.

Insufficient Funding for Homeland Security Programs

- ***Cuts First Responder Programs*** — The Homeland Security appropriations bill cuts funding for first responder programs at the Department of Homeland Security from \$4.4. billion to \$4.1 billion, a cut of \$327 million below the 2004 enacted level. The bill's increase (\$279 million) for grants for high-threat urban areas is offset by a larger cut (\$440 million) to formula-based grants. The bill cuts funding for firefighter assistance grants by \$146 million (19.6 percent) from the 2004 enacted level of \$746 million. A 2003 Council on Foreign Relations study estimated \$98 billion in unmet needs for first responders.
- ***Fails to Adequately Fund Port Security*** — The Committee-reported bill essentially freezes funding for port security grants at the 2004 level of \$124 million. The full Committee defeated a Democratic amendment that would have made additional funding available for port security grants. Port security grants from the Department of Homeland Security provide funds for port agencies to install the fencing, surveillance technologies, and other measures needed to prevent

terrorists from gaining access to docks and other port facilities. The Coast Guard reports needs in this area totaling \$5.4 billion over ten years.

- ***Fails to Adequately Fund Air Cargo Security*** — The bill provides \$115 million for air cargo security: \$40 million for program operations, and \$75 million for research and development. Although this total represents an increase over the President's \$85 million request, it falls well short of what is needed. While the bill requires the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security to double the percentage of cargo transported on passenger aircraft that is being inspected, a Democratic amendment that would have required a five-fold increase in that percentage was rejected on a largely party-line vote during full Committee markup. Approximately 2.8 million tons of cargo per year — more than one-fifth of all air cargo — travels on commercial passenger planes.

Failure to Safeguard the Environment

- ***Slashes Promised Conservation Funding*** — The 2005 Interior appropriations bill cuts funding for the most pressing conservation, recreation, and wildlife needs by nearly 22 percent below the 2004 enacted level. Congress committed to fund the Interior portion of the Conservation Trust Fund at \$1.7 billion for 2005, yet the Interior appropriations bill provides only \$832 million — less than half of the promised amount and a steep cut from the 2004 enacted level. While \$900 million was promised for the Land and Water Conservation Fund as part of the total Trust Fund, the Interior appropriations bill provides only \$140 million — less than 20 percent — for the intended purposes of preserving parks, forests, wildlife refuges, and open space. For the first time in over 40 years, no funding is provided for federal land acquisition projects.
- ***Shortfall in Hazardous Fuels Reduction Funding*** — The Interior appropriations bill does not fully fund the Healthy Forests Initiative, which reduces the loss of life and property from wildfires. The bill provides only \$476 million of the \$760 million authorized for hazardous fuels reduction.
- ***Cuts Nearly \$700 Million of President's Major Requested Increases*** — While the Interior appropriations bill's total is close to the President's 2005 request, the Committee sliced nearly \$700 million off some of the major program increases the President requested. Because the budget resolution restricts domestic funding, appropriators shifted money from programs the President supported to other priorities. For example, the bill eliminates \$219 million from the President's request for the FutureGen clean coal power plant initiative, \$170 million from land acquisition, \$57 million from the Forest Legacy program, \$53 million from the abandoned mine reclamation fund, and a total of \$42 million from the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities.